

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, September 19, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. S. S. Herder, South of Ireland, September 19th., 1880. My dear Mrs. Bell:

Our voyage is drawing to a close, and before we land I must send you a few lines to tell you we are alive and better for the journey disagreeable as it has been. Well — we have neither collided with somebody like the Anchoria foundered like the Vera Cruz and I trust donot intend to go ashore like the Schiller, but the fog has constantly been thick enough for the first and most of us thought the vessel pitched enough for the second, and for the last — well the sea is calmer but the clouds look very threatening Who can tell? Nevermind, my life preserving jacket and baby's rubber tub are at hand and I feel quite safe whatever happens, though to be sure I should not like to test them. Leaving New York and my dear Sister and Brother, we rode right into a storm and every one except myself gave up completely. Little Elsie was sick that one afternoon and then revived and has been happy ever since the pet alike of officers and passengers and in spite of the unlimited amount of crackers and sugar and fruit they persist in filling her with. Alec and the nurse, Annie were both very sick for two or three days and Alec has since suffered with headache from the heavy rolling of the vessel. Of fellow passengers we have but two a Miss Merohant and jewish boy and considering that the Saloon was intended to seat about two hundred you may imagine we feel rather lost. However we like it for we are pretty nearly “Monarch of all we survey”. In the Steerage and 2nd. Cabin there may be forty altogether but I doubt, Coming to America the Captain says they were choke full, and the doctor had a lively time of it looking after two new passengers who arrived in mid ocean. This I suppose you know is the same steamer that Sister came in when she met Maurice. We saw Sister for two or three days before we sailed and thought her looking much better and stronger. Maurice I am happy to say had shaved 2 his moustache and grown his hair

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again and so looked natural. I find that it is possible to be as badly off for servants in New York as in the wilds of Canada. Mrs. Groesmam has a very pleasant house by Central Park in New York, but that is a good way from the centre of the city and they find it almost impossible to get any girls to go out so far, while the majority utterly refuse to serve with foreigners though they pay from eighteen to twenty dollars a month! That, when \$12. per month is usually given! The young ladies have to do most of the hard work themselves and when I saw them seemed utterly worn out.

We had a cablegram from Papa from Zurich Switzerland on the vessel and we expect to meet them in Cherbourg, France where we hope to be this time tomorrow. We sight land tonight. Plymouth at 12 tomorrow, and land at Cherbourg at five. In spite of my two and twenty years, my matronly and motherly dignity I feel like dancing a variable "jig" to think I shall so soon see my Mother and father.

Goodbye, Much love to all, and thank you for your telegram. So you had Alec's dress suit. I am only glad to know where it is for we have been scolding expressmen and trunk repairers about it,

Lovingly, your daughter, Mabel.